



# SPECIAL ISSUANCE AGENCY

The U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Consular Affairs

## WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

### Passport Photo Suspense! **THE HORROR!**

Have you had an application suspended for passport photos? You're not alone! Find out how you can keep the passport photo **MONSTERS** at bay.

[GET THE SCOOP](#)

### Annual Certification Due...Now!

Your passport facility's annual certification must be received at SIA by October 31<sup>st</sup>. See tips for submitting completed packets correctly the first time.

[GET THE SCOOP](#)

### DoD Acceptance Agent Training Class Question & Answer Session

You have questions and we have answers! See the frequent questions asked by passport agents, like you, at the DoD acceptance agent training classes.

[GET THE SCOOP](#)

### Your One-Stop-Shop for Passport and Visa Information!

Travel.state.gov/sia brings you the most up-to-date passport-related news! Find important SIA announcements, current processing times, passport forms, and much more!

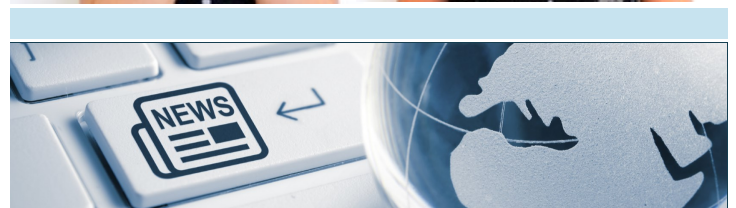
[VISIT SIA ONLINE](#)

## DOD NEWSLETTER 2<sup>ND</sup> EDITION

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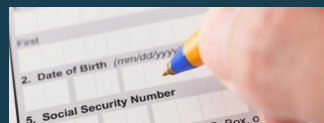
### *Picture Perfect Passport Photo Edition*



Get the latest news on [travel.state.gov/sia](https://travel.state.gov/sia)



**No Glasses in  
Passport Photos  
Effective: November 1<sup>st</sup>**



**SSN Must Be On All  
Passport Applications  
Effective: October 1<sup>st</sup>**

## AVOID THE TOP 8 NOT SO GREAT PASSPORT PHOTO MISTAKES!

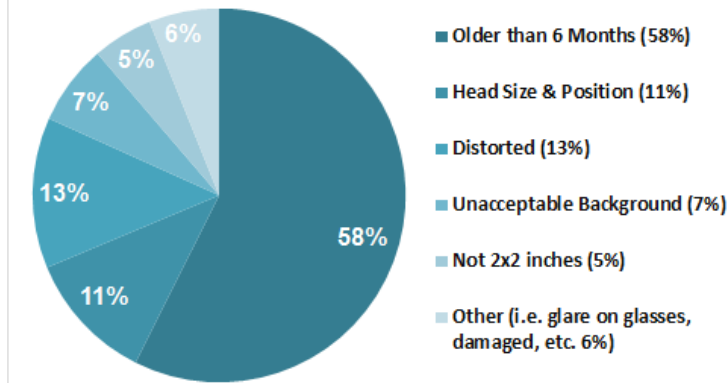
1. Always use four staples to attach photos to the passport application.
2. Applicants must now remove their eye glasses when taking passport photos due to glare on lenses.
3. Photos cannot be older than six months. Use significant appearance changes, IDs, and passports to determine the age of passport photos.
4. Photos must be clear and reflect the applicants true skin tone, eye color, etc. Photos that are too light or too dark will be rejected.
5. Applicant's face must be visible and centered in the frame.
6. Do not paperclip over the photo! This can cause indents and the photo will be unusable.
7. Use high quality paper and ensure the image is in high resolution to avoid blurry or grainy photos.
8. Backgrounds must be in a plain white color.

Please visit [travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/passports/photos/photos.html](https://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/passports/photos/photos.html) for additional detailed guidelines. [Print the Top 8 Infographic.](#)

HELPFUL REMINDERS FOR AGENTS THAT WILL HELP US TO QUICKLY AND EFFICIENTLY PROCESS YOUR APPLICATIONS

## PASSPORT PHOTO SUSPENSE! THE HORROR!

2016 Official Passport Suspense Sample Cases for Photo Issues

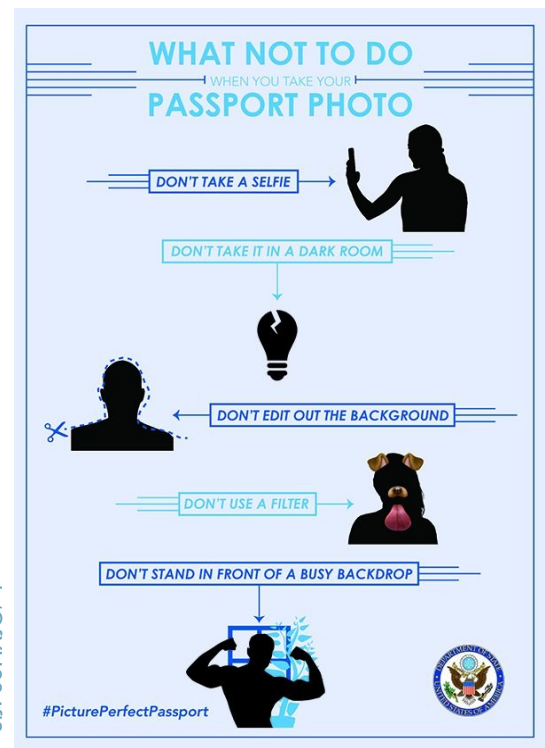
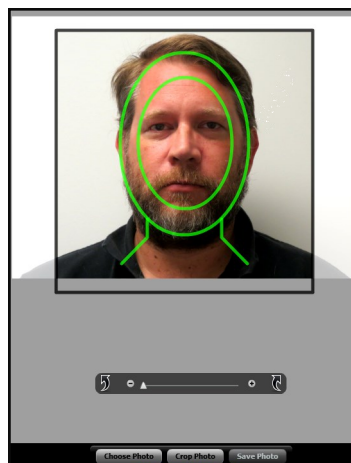


It's scary how many passport applications are suspended each year for bad photos at our passport agencies nationwide. In the first half of 2016, the Special Issuance Agency had suspended approximately 1,000 official passport applications and 114 military dependent passport applications due to photo issues. Applications can be suspended for a variety of reasons. The above graph represents a sample of 115 randomly selected official passport applications and reports the percentage for each type of photo issue.

## HOW TO TAKE A DIGITAL PASSPORT PHOTO

With the availability of new technology, your applicants can take their own passport photos conveniently. Help them take a **picture perfect passport photo!**

**Are your applicants using a digital photo?**  
Instruct them to use the **Smart Photo Cropping Tool** to perfectly size their digital photos!



Tips, Hacks, and How-Tos

## HAVE YOU SUBMITTED YOUR DOD ANNUAL CERTIFICATION PACKET?

## Why is it important?

The DoD passport program is vast and ever changing, so it is critical that all information about your facility and passport agents stored in our database is correct and up-to-date. All information in the annual certification packet will be given to DET to update VPAS.

## PRO TIPS

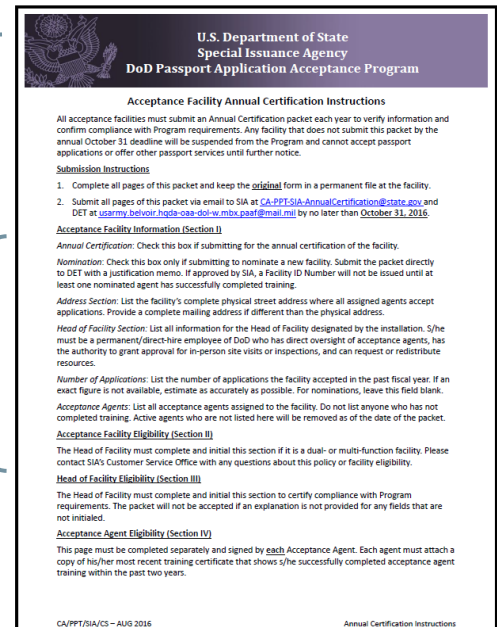
-From the 2016 Annual Certification expert, Laura Nelson:

- \* **Read the instructions carefully!** The easiest way to avoid having to resubmit the whole packet is to read and follow the instructions on the first page.
- \* If SIA has requested a correction, make the correction and resubmit the whole packet (all pages)
- \* Send your completed packet to SIA as a PDF document. JPG images and handwritten submissions may degrade the quality and make the packet unreadable. The Annual Certification packet has been made into a fillable PDF form for your convenience.
- \* Submit only one (1) packet per facility which includes each passport agent's completed Agent Eligibility page.

New color and branding.

Clear and concise instructions.

## What's New in the 2016 Annual Certification Packet



**DUE NOW: MONDAY, OCTOBER 31, 2016**

*Click on the image for a printable version*

## PASSPORT PHOTO WORD SEARCH

T O H O O J X Z B E P K L D D  
K N E B E W G L A S S E S A E  
J U N S S O I E C R N Y T R R  
F R O T T K L A K Y D X N K E  
Y H N R A K R D G E L I G H T  
J F D U P J C O R R T M P D N  
M Z X C L T D X O A L E R L E  
C H Q T E V E W U L Q Y A A C  
Q D H I S X H A N G K T E R D  
M O G O S F C H D J Y I L G M  
F B N N Q A A U S X X L C E M  
J X G R F U T I N H A A M T W  
U Y D C B P T J N M H U F D K  
Y T D G P L A V S I P Q H O R  
P W N H S K M J S H A D O W I

GOOD PHOTOS:

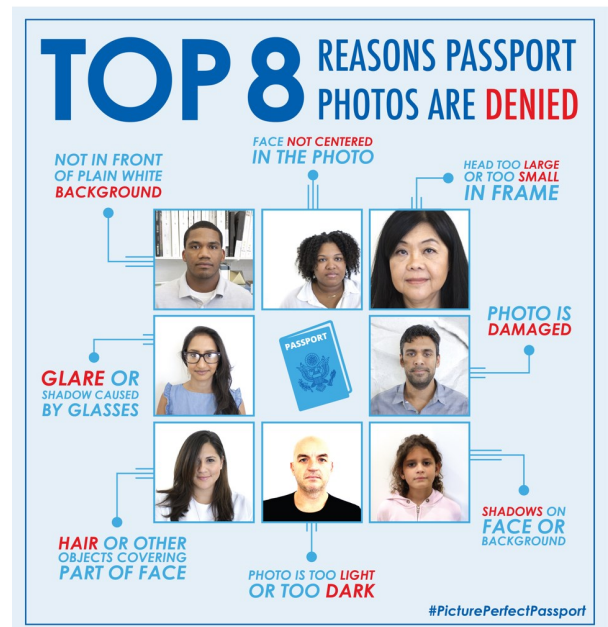
QUALITY  
BACKGROUNDS

CENTERED  
ATTACHED

STAPLES  
CLEAR

BAD PHOTOS:

DARK  
LIGHT  
OLD  
GLARE  
GLASSES  
LARGE  
SMALL  
OBSTRUCTION  
SHADOW



*Tips, Hacks, and How-Tos*



## Danny White, Entitlement Manager



As SIA's Entitlement Manager since 2013, one of Danny White's many responsibilities is to help create entitlement policies for special issuance passports, as well as to review unusual entitlement cases. Danny started at SIA in 2006 as a passport specialist working in both the Diplomatic and Congressional sections. Prior to working at SIA, Danny spent 22 years in the U.S. Air Force, including two tours overseas in Germany and Jordan. Danny credits his experience at the Pentagon, where he worked closely with the DOD Executive Agent and the Foreign Clearance Guide Program, as being the most beneficial for his current position at SIA. Danny's prior military experience (during which he held two special issuance passports), his time at SIA, and his extensive knowledge about federal applicants have allowed him to excel at his role as SIA's first Entitlement Manager.

## Jennifer DeWitt Walsh, SIA Director



In June 2016, the Special Issuance Agency welcomed its newest Director, Jennifer DeWitt Walsh. Jennifer's experience in passport and citizen services include teaching the passport section of the Department of State's Basic Consular Course and tours as the

Chief of American Citizen Services at the U.S. embassies in Caracas, Venezuela, and Kingston, Jamaica. Building off her recent work in the Department's Office of eDiplomacy, Jennifer plans to concentrate on improving user experience during her tenure at SIA.

Jennifer, a native of Wyoming, is a historian by training but finds living people almost as interesting as dead ones. Prior to entering the Department of State she taught history in Medellín, Colombia, and worked as a staff historian at one of the first public history firms in the United States. She joined the Foreign Service as a consular officer in 1997 and did her first tour at what was then the U.S. Interests Section in Havana, Cuba.

Upon her departure from Havana, Jennifer married a fellow consular officer with whom she had served there. Over the years, she has served in a broad array of Foreign Service

positions, including General Services Officer (Shanghai, China), Public Affairs Officer (Lagos, Nigeria), Deputy Principal Officer (Alexandria, Egypt), and as head of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement at the U.S. Embassy in Cairo.

In each of these challenging environments, she has been guided by the words of President Theodore Roosevelt, "Do what you can, where you are, with what you have."

Jennifer has been on both sides of passport services, whether issuing emergency passports to American citizens abroad, documenting new American citizens born abroad, or building up a collection of diplomatic and regular passports with her own husband and two children. She believes that empathy is the bedrock of designing good user experiences and understands the importance of providing clarity for acceptance agents and applicants. As SIA's Director, Jennifer seeks to create a better experience for applicants, agents, and consular officers alike. She especially wants to help applicants apply correctly the first time, seeing that as the key to a happier experience for all involved. Overall, Jennifer understands the challenges faced by everyone charged with supporting the U.S. foreign affairs mission and wants to ensure that getting service members properly documented to do that is not one of those challenges.

*Who's Who at SIA*



You have **Questions** and we have **Answers!** Here are some questions asked by passport agents, like you, at the DoD acceptance agent training classes.

**Q<sub>1</sub>:** Can I accept an application without a SSN?

**A<sub>1</sub>:** *No. An acceptance facility cannot accept an application without the SSN or the written statement (attached to this newsletter).*

**Q<sub>2</sub>:** What information goes in Block #2 of the DD Form 1056 if the applicant is a DoD school teacher?

**A<sub>2</sub>:** *For DoD school teachers, you would enter “DDDS” in VPAS.*

**Q<sub>3</sub>:** How do we resolve a suspense case that is denied?

**A<sub>3</sub>:** *If a suspense case goes unanswered or unresolved after 90 days and is denied the applicant will be required to submit a new application to reapply.*

**Q<sub>4</sub>:** What do we do when the Soldiers (i.e. EOD Units) need a passport, but do not have travel dates when applying for a passport?

**A<sub>4</sub>:** *EOD units have already been approved for a waiver that allows them to leave travel dates blank on DD Form 1056. A copy of the waiver letter must be submitted with each passport application. DET is the point of contact for waiver letters.*

**Q<sub>5</sub>:** How do we get a SOFA Stamp if it is missing from a special issuance passport?

**A<sub>5</sub>:** *For applicants who are still in CONUS, submit a DS-4085, DD Form 1056, and the passport to SIA to have the SOFA stamp added.*

**Q<sub>6</sub>:** Does the Directorate of Executive Travel (DET) process MFO endorsements?

**A<sub>6</sub>:** *No. Requests to add MFO endorsements to an official passport must be mailed to SIA.*

**Q<sub>7</sub>:** How do we obtain a list of vendors to order a Facility Stamp?

**A<sub>7</sub>:** *Stamps should be procured off of the local market and meet the established criteria. Please refer to the [New Stamp and Seal Requirement](#) notice posted on DoD Passport Matters Website and also included in the appendix section of your training binder.*

**Q<sub>8</sub>:** Why are some applications approved and some not when the same information has been provided on the DD Form 1056?

**A<sub>8</sub>:** *If the travel destination on the application, DD Form 1056, or supporting documentation is missing or incomplete or if there is a conflict in information, the passport agency may request additional documentation, such as TAD/TDY or PCS orders, for verification of entitlement to the special issuance passport.*

**Q<sub>9</sub>:** Do you want us to provide an APO address or a stateside address on a passport application?

**A<sub>9</sub>:** *Please provide the physical address of the overseas DoD facility or embassy/consulate location where the physical passport is to be returned. SIA cannot return a completed passports to an APO or FPO address.*

**Q<sub>10</sub>:** Who is the new DoD Liaison? How can I contact them? What can he or she do for me?

**A<sub>10</sub>:** *SIA's new DoD Liaison, Adam Barker, can be contacted by email at [BarkerA@state.gov](mailto:BarkerA@state.gov) or by phone (202) 485-8188. The DoD Liaison is a Customer Service Representative from DET, Ft. Belvoir, but physically located at SIA. They **can** answer the nitty gritty inquiries of the DoD passport process, such as issues with VPAS, suspense cases, status checks, and requests for upgrades. The DoD Liaison **cannot** remove holds or resolve legal cases.*